

MAX'S CONOCO



Max Julian began his career as an operator of a service station business in Rock Springs, Wyoming, in 1968. He moved his family to Casper and opened a new Standard Oil of Indiana Service Station. About a year later he was approached by Conoco. Max accepted the offer and leased the station for about 10 years. In 1978, Conoco asked him if he was interested in purchasing the station's equipment. Max obtained a commercial bank loan for the equipment and then the land and building were offered for sale. Max obtained a guaranteed loan from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and the loan was paid in full ten years later.

But, as Max says, "This business has over come a variety of obstacles in the last twenty-five years." "We've been through two oil and gas booms and the bust aftermath." After a short recovery period, Max then was faced with the implementation of the Leaking Underground Storage Tank (L.U.S.T) regulations. This Wyoming law required all underground tanks be tested and brought up to standard. Test results could lead to large required expenditures from the small business.

The Conoco property was tested and Max began a new chapter in his entrepreneurial experience. The project was to safely remove the old tanks and tear down the old building. After this was accomplished Max wanted to build a new convenience store but he needed financing. Max approached every bank in town with no luck. He decided to talk to Leonard Holler, the Region 3 Director of the Small Business Development Center. With Leonard's help, Max was able to put together a business plan which indicated that the project was feasible. With the business plan in hand, Max approached the President of Norwest Bank (currently Wells Fargo) and the Wyoming Industrial Development Corporation (WIDC). In 1997, Max received a SBA guaranteed loan from Wells Fargo for \$180,000 and an additional loan in the amount of \$180,000 from WIDC. In order to obtain a loan from WIDC, jobs must be created. Four new jobs (for a total of seven) were created as a result of these loans and in 1998, the business reopened with a totally new look and focus. The city of Casper benefited from a new business, additional job creation and a clean property.

This family owned and operated business has been a successful venture for Max, his wife, Nancy and son, Justin. For more information you can reach Max's at (307) 237-7609, 706 North Center, Casper, Wyoming 82601.

